

ARMADILLOS

NAME: Armadillos

SCIENTIFIC NAME: Dasypodidae

TYPE: Mammals

DIET: Omnivores

LOCATION: Latin America

The armadillo was named by Spanish explorers, its name means "little armoured one".

WHAT IS AN ARMADILLO?

Closely related to anteaters and sloths, the armadillo is the proud owner of bony plates that cover its back, head, legs, and tail. With 20 varieties of armadillos, all but one live in Latin America.

Armadillos have pointy snouts and long sticky tongues, very similar to their close cousin; the anteater. Known for their poor eyesight, armadillos hunt with a highly developed sense of smell!



HOME SWEET HOME

Because Armadillos prefer the weather to be nice and warm, you can find them sticking close to the equator in Central and South America. This is because of their low fat levels.

They love to dig burrows and sleep for more than 16 hours per day! They do most of their foraging in the early mornings while hunting for beetles, ants, termites, and other insects is done in the evening.

ARMADILLOS AND THEIR BABIES

After a pregnancy period of two to five months, the female will give birth to one to 12 young in a birthing burrow. These burrows can be 4.5 metres wide!

It is common for armadillos to give birth to twin pups, but the nine-banded armadillo has four identical pups of the same gender, every litter!

The pups are weaned off their mother two to four months later. By nine to twelve months, the pups are mature and ready to have offspring of their own.



DID YOU KNOW?

The screaming hairy armadillo gets its name from the sound it makes when threatened. A coward you say? I'm afraid not. This feisty little friend has been known to throw its body on top of snakes, killing them by cutting the snake with the sharp edges of its shell.

FACTS!

Armadillos can walk underwater.

Armadillos can be pinkish, dark-brown, black, red, grey or yellowish in colour.



Only the three-banded armadillo can curl into the ball to protect itself from predators. Other armadillos run or dig a hole to escape.

